

Standard 6-3

The student will demonstrate an understanding of the Middle Ages and the emergence of nation-states.

- 6.3.4** Explain the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, including its role in spreading Christianity and the fact that monasteries affected education and the arts by founding universities and preserving ancient language and learning.
(H, G)

Taxonomy Level: B 2 Understand/Conceptual Knowledge

Previous/future knowledge:

This is the first time students have been taught about the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe.

In Global Studies, students will summarize the functions of feudalism and the evolution of the relationship between the secular states and the Roman Catholic Church (GS-2.5).

It is essential for students to evaluate the cultural role of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe during the Middle Ages. With the fall of the Roman Empire, the Catholic Church became the greatest source of stability and self-identification in Western Europe for over 1,000 years. During the early Middle Ages monasteries began to develop as a place where people could separate themselves from society and live a life of isolation in their dedication to God. Following the Benedictine model, monasteries began to change in the 6th Century and became locales that would be both caretaker and disseminator of the Christian message and its influence. Monasteries became centers of learning and sustainers of culture in two dominate ways. First they preserved Christian writings, particularly the *Bible*, by producing hand-made copies that were kept and passed down through the ages (example: Irish monasteries developed the *scriptorium* which became the heart of their monasteries). In this way, great works of early Christians were safeguarded for history. It is in the context of preserving these works that much of the great art of medieval Europe was created. (example: the *Book of Kells*). Secondly, they became centers of learning. Initially spurred by Charlemagne's decree to educate boys, primarily in training for the priesthood, many monastic centers had expanded their curricula to include a wider array of subjects by the 11th Century. It is from these monastic learning centers that universities were first formed (example: the first university grew from the monastic schools surrounding Notre Dame Cathedral where students were allowed to study under any of the teachers within these schools) and where degrees in theology were the most esteemed. The primary goal of the Roman Catholic Church and the core purpose of monasteries were one - to influence people to become Christians. Monasteries originally attempted to become ideal communities which would spur people to live holier, more dedicated lives. Eventually monasteries created religious orders, some of which (examples: the Franciscans and Dominicans) placed great emphasis on spreading Christianity and promoting the teachings of the Catholic Church.

It is not essential for students to know art techniques used by monks or to know exact works they produced. While students do not have to know specific religious orders (or

their rules), it is important they understand the role of these orders in spreading Christianity. Neither is it essential for students to know the names of the first universities founded.

Assessment guidelines: In order to measure understanding of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church in Europe, appropriate assessment will require students to **exemplify** influence on education and the arts and the spread of Christianity. Assessments should require students to **hypothesize** as to how education and learning would have differed without the Church. It would be appropriate for students to **summarize** the role of monasteries and defend their importance in the preservation of a Christian culture in Western Europe.